(d) According to the Government policy on iron-ore exports, MMTC continues to be the canalising agency for export of iron-ore with iron content 64% and above. Government has also been allowing private exporters who own iron-ore mines to export high-grade iron-ore in order to bring in healthy competition as a part of progressive and liberalized policy.

Applications pending for patent registration

475. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications received by Patent Office Chennai for registration of patents of new inventions emanated from Karnataka for the last three years;

(b) whether there is any proposal to open a Patent Office in Bangalore to help the enterpreneurs, industrialists, scientists and technologists to register patents without much delay; and

(c) if so, by when such Patent Office is likely to be set up in Bangalore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) The number of applications received by the Patent Office, Chennai for registration of patents emanating from Karnataka in the last three years is as under:

Year	Number of applications received
2001-2002	147
2000-2001	112
"1999-2000	122

(b) and (c)There is no proposal to set up a Patent Office in Bangalore. However, in order to ensure speedy grant of patents, Government has undertaken the comprehensive modernisation of all its Patent Offices, including the Patent Office at Chennai. Additional staff having adequate technical qualifications has already been sanctioned to cater to the increasing workload in the Patent Offices. Further, comprehensive

computerisation of operations in the Patent Offices has also been undertaken. In order to link up all the offices electronically, thereby enabling them to exchange information/data. A Manual of Patent Practice and Procedure has also been issued and put on the webside to ensure unformity and transparency in the procedure for grant of patents. The modernized and networked offices will not only reduce the delay but would also obviate the need for establishing patent offices at several locations.

Increase in export

† 476. SHRI LAJPAT RAI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that export from the country has been on the increase constantly in the past years;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that this export is increasing to the countries which are traditional importers of Indian goods;

(c) if so, the names of countries to which export has increased along with the percentage of increase;

(d) the names of such new countries to which export have been made during the last three years; and

(e) the percentage of average annual export to these countries during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) Yes, Sir. Value of Indian export of merchandise goods has increased from a level of US$ 31.8 billion in 1995-96 to US$ 43.8 billion in 2001 -2002. During this period, the growth of exports had declined only in 1998-1999 owing to South East Asian Financial crisis and again in 2001-2002 due to world economic slowdown and impact of September 11 events. Export growth in April-December, 2002-2003 has been 20.36% compared to the coresponding period of last year.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.